

The legislation on the floor today, a bill to defund National Public Radio, is another example of a Republican-Tea Party agenda which kills jobs and imposes an extremist right-wing ideological agenda on the American people. This bill and debate is about titillating right wing passions and silencing public broadcasting – nothing more. It is time for listeners of public radio, viewers of public television, and all citizens who value non-commercial broadcasting to make their voices heard or some valuable radio stations and important programming will disappear.

In my state, Minnesota Public Radio is a treasured source of information and an important employer. The effects of this legislation would hurt National Public Radio, hurt Minnesota Public Radio, and Minnesotans who value this critical public media resource. Currently, public broadcasting in Minnesota receives over \$4.2 million in federal grants, and that funding is at risk as a result of this bill.

This ill-conceived and mean-spirited attack on an important non-profit employer would mean hundreds of lost jobs in Minnesota and the silencing of important public broadcasting content currently heard by tens of millions of Americans every week. Again, this is not surprising coming from a Republican-Tea Party majority that has already passed legislation that would eliminate nearly a million American jobs.

While Democrats are fighting to strengthen the economy and create jobs, the Republican-Tea Party is pursuing an agenda that kills jobs, busts unions, and rewards big corporations with taxpayer handouts. This extreme agenda is an affront to the American people and seriously diminishes the ability for bipartisan solutions to our nation's most serious challenges.

The bill is on the floor today in large part because of the exploits of a Republican operative who doubles as a muckraking dirty trickster. This faux-journalist lied to a National Public Radio executive to secure a meeting and then pieced together a deceptively-edited video of a secretly taped meeting. One media expert called the media sabotage of NPR by James O'Keefe, "...unethical. It's pretty scummy."

Mr. James O'Keefe, the Republican operative who deceived NPR, is most famous for being arrested and convicted of attempting to infiltrate the office of a Democratic U.S. Senator while impersonating a telephone repairman in an attempt to eavesdrop on calls between constituents and congressional staff. Now Mr. O'Keefe's criminal and unethical behavior is being used by the

Republican-Tea Party majority in the U.S. House to pass a law to defund NPR.

I guess today's legislation could be called an example of yellow policy-making based upon yellow journalism – except for the fact that any reference to journalism even in its most pejorative form in association with Mr. O'Keefe is a discredit to journalism.

Mr. O'Keefe is in better company with Republicans such as former President Richard Nixon and former House Majority Leader Tom DeLay in their efforts to embrace criminal behavior in the pursuit of political advantage.

The millions and millions of Americans who seek unbiased news, information, educational, and cultural programming should not be surprised that the Republican-Tea Party Congress and their corporate sponsors want to eliminate funding for National Public Radio. This legislation is not about deficit reduction because this bill fails to reduce the federal budget deficit by even \$1 according to the Congressional Budget Office, but it is about advancing a right-wing political agenda at NPR's expense.

This week, the Republican-Tea Party held an emergency meeting about so-called urgently needed legislation.

What was the emergency? Were we finally going to consider a jobs bill? No.

The "emergency" declared was to prohibit federal funding to go to NPR.

This bill will prevent all public radio stations from using federal funds to purchase any programming from any source. The Republican-Tea Party majority wants to take control away from our local stations, like Minnesota Public Radio. It means that local stations, across the country, will not be able to use these funds to get programming from two of the largest public radio organizations in the country - American Public Media and Public Radio International – both located in Minnesota. That means stations could not use the funds to purchase programs like the beloved 'A Prairie Home Companion' and 'This American Life'.

Why have the Republicans brought this bill to the floor without as much as a single minute of consideration in a hearing or in committee?

This NPR "emergency" is not to help struggling families and debate a badly-needed jobs bill right before we leave on a week-long recess.

It is to consider legislation that will weaken our community. That will cost jobs in Minnesota. And all the Republican-Tea Partiers will vote for it based on the antics of a Republican operative who makes a living from lying.

I would urge Members of the U.S. House and all Americans who value journalistic integrity and valuable public media outlets, like Minnesota Public Radio, to fight against a very bad bill and the harm it would cause to our communities.